an element of surprise by the shortness but concentrated power of the artillery bombardment, and the rush of troops advancing behind an effective artillery barrage. In 48 hours he had recovered a further extensive strip of ground and captured 11,000 prisoners. The number of his prisoners alone exceeded that of his total losses in the victorious engagement. Here, indeed, had arisen the long expected military leader for bleeding France—a Captain who could win battles without sacrificing his brave legionaries.

It is interesting, in view of Sir William Robertson's subsequent general attitude towards General Nivelle, *Robertson's to &*ve ^ere ^s report to ^hz* War Cabinet *report on* on General Nivelle[5] s successful operation *Mfaibs* of 16th December, 1916, together with *tactics* j^s comments on the strategy of that operation :—

" sist December, 1916,

> The French attack at Verdun appears to have been a complete surprise to the enemy. A heavy bombardment had been maintained for about a week previously on both banks of the Meuse and this probably misled him as to the point of attack. The early capture of the Cote de Poivre seems to have led to considerable numbers of the enemy having their retreat cut off. . . . The enemy's losses, in addition to prisoners, were probably

extremely heavy. The actual numbers engaged on each side were approximately equal. . . . Both on 24th October and on 15th December, at Verdun, the enemy were surprised and their resistance was easily overcome by equal or even inferior numbers, and unusually large captures of prisoners and guns were made. In the attack on